SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

LARRY RACHLEFF, music director

Sunday, October 4, 2009

8:00 p.m.

Stude Concert Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY | the Shepherd School of Music

PROGRAM

Overture to "The Barber of Seville" — *Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)*

Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, Op. 52 — *Robert Schumann (1810-1856)*

Cristian Măcelaru, conductor

INTERMISSION

Divertimento *(for string orchestra)* — *Béla Bartók (1881-1945)*

Allegro non troppo
Molto adagio
Allegro assai

The reverberative acoustics of Stude Concert Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Violin I
SoJin Kim, concertmaster
Malorie Blake
Ying Fu
Jiyeon Min
Eric Siu
Regina Dyches
Andrew Ling

Violin II
Tiantian Zhang principal
Lijia Phang
Tracy Wu
Emily Jackson
Alyssa Yank
Emil Ivanov
Brooke Bennett

Viola
Hillary Schoap, principal
Alicia Valoti
Marissa Winship
Jules Sulpico
Molly Gebrian
Padua Canty

Cello
Lachezar Kostov, principal
Hope Shepherd
Andrew Bradford
SeHee Kim
Caroline Nicolas

Double Bass
Kevin Brown, principal
Paul Cannon
Katherine Munagian

Flute
Henrik Heide
Natalie Zeldin

Oboe
Clara Blood
Stanley Chyi
Kristin Kall
Erica Overmyer

Clarinet
Erika Cikraji
Carlos Cordeiro
André Dyachenko
Jared Hawkins

Bassoon
Matthew McDonald
Maxwell Pipinich

Horn
Matthew Muehl-Miller
Roman Ponomariov
Nicholas Wolny
Alena Zidlicky

Trumpet
Ryan Darke
Alexander Fioto
Roberto Lares
Robert Zider

Timpani and Percussion
Robert Garza
Andrés Pichardo

Orchestra Manager and Librarian
Kaaren Fleisher

Production Manager
Megan Manning

Assistant Production Manager
Mandy Billings
Francis Schmidt

STRING SEATING CHANGES WITH EACH CONCERT.
WINDS AND BRASS LISTED ALPHABETICALLY.

UPCOMING ORCHESTRA EVENTS

November 4, 6, 8 and 10 – SHEPHERD SCHOOL OPERA and the SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA present ***Prologue from "Ariadne auf Naxos"*** *by Richard Strauss and* ***Viva la Mamma!*** *by Gaetano Donizetti. Richard Bado, conductor; Cristian Măcelaru, conductor (Nov. 10); Debra Dickinson, director. Sunday's performance (Nov. 8) at 2:00 p.m.; all other performances at 7:30 p.m. Wortham Opera Theatre at the Shepherd School. Admission (general seating): $12; students and senior citizens $10. For tickets call 713-348-8000.*

Saturday, November 7, 8:00 p.m. – SHEPHERD SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Larry Rachleff, conductor PROGRAM: Sibelius - ***Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47*** *(Ying Fu, soloist; Cristian Măcelaru, conductor); and Stravinsky -* ***Petrushka*** *(1947 version). Stude Concert Hall. Free admission.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to "The Barber of Seville" . . . . *Gioachino Rossini*

Gioachino Rossini's family was hardly wealthy, but it was musical: his father was a horn player and his mother an untrained, yet respected, operatic soprano. By age thirteen in 1805, Gioachino himself had already sung in Paer's opera ***Camilla*** *in Bologna and had also shown terrific promise as a composer with his six* ***Sonate a quattro****, several overtures, and even masses. At the age of fourteen he began his studies at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna, and though he continued to compose some sacred and chamber music, he went on to enjoy unparalleled success in the opera world, beginning with* ***La Pietra del Paragone*** *at La Scala in 1812. Thirty-nine operas later, Rossini retired in 1830 at the height of his career, for reasons about which we can only speculate. During the remaining decades of his life, he spent his time tending his famed Parisian salon and concocting recipes as an amateur chef. He never wrote another opera, though he briefly considered setting Goethe's* ***Faust*** *as a final project.*

Rossini was famous during his life for tremendous compositional speed, and true to form, during the second decade of the nineteenth century, he turned out stage works at an astonishing rate that has rarely, if ever, been matched. In fact, the 1816 premiere of ***Il Barbiere di Siviglia*** *marked the then twenty-four year-old composer's seventeenth production since his debut, and he had completed the entire work in fewer than three weeks. Apparently unsatisfied with the overture he had originally drafted, however, he borrowed an earlier one that he had already used in two other operas – both tragic operas, interestingly enough.* ***Il Barbiere****, a comedy through-and-through, is based on Beaumarchais' play of the same name, and tells the story of Figaro, an ingenious barber who assists a young aristocrat in winning his beloved's hand by outwitting her suspicious, old guardian. The subject posed an unfortunate problem for Rossini: Giovanni Paisiello, an older, greatly admired composer, had set an opera by the same name in 1782, and his followers felt threatened. In an effort to keep peace, Rossini presented the work not as* ***Il Barbiere*** *but as* ***Almaviva, ossia L'Inutile Precauzione*** *(the useless precaution). Opening night was still a disaster: hostile Paisiello supporters, encouraged by a series of embarrassing onstage accidents, started a riot in the concert hall that would seem to have doomed the opera's chances at success. Against all odds, though, the second night was a triumph. Unfortunately, Rossini, anticipating a continuing fiasco, feigned illness and missed it.*

In form, the overture largely adheres to Rossini's overture formula – a sure factor in his ability to compose so quickly. It begins with grand chords and startling dynamic contrasts to grab the audience's attention, but soon melts into a more quiet and romantic theme before transitioning to the famous E minor Allegro con brio. *From here, solo winds begin a new section in the major mode, and this, alternating with the original minor theme, gives way to a final and exhilarating* piu mosso. *The trademark "Rossini crescendo," just before this last section, may be the overture's only connection to the opera: as Don Basilio explains in his famous aria, this is exactly how rumors spread, growing from a tiny whisper to a monumental explosion.*

Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, Op. 52 . . . . *Robert Schumann*

On September 12, 1840, Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck were married. It was the triumphant end of the couple's years of frustration, doubt, and anxiety about Clara's father, who had done everything in his power to prevent their union. Having just narrowly won their prize, Robert and Clara settled

down to what they hoped would be domestic bliss and creative fulfillment in an artistic relationship extraordinary for its time. Despite the newlyweds' high expectations, their first year of marriage turned out to be difficult and full of emotional adjustment for both. The period was nonetheless an inspired one for Robert in particular: until then he had written almost exclusively for the piano, but before the year's end he prepared 168 songs for publication. It was so abrupt a change in Schumann's creative output that scholars refer to 1840 as his Liederjahr *(year of song).*

From there he continued to experiment with different genres, and in barely two weeks he finished the draft of his first orchestral piece, the B-flat major "Spring" Symphony, early in 1841. In just a few more weeks after the premiere of the First Symphony, he also completed an overture in E major and then a scherzo. Before summer of the same year, when "in a most joyous mood," he then decided to add a finale to the emerging suite or "symphonette" as he called it. The Schumanns eagerly anticipated the premiere of what was ultimately titled ***Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, Op. 52****, along with a Symphony in D minor (his eventual Fourth Symphony) on the same program late in 1841, but both pieces met with generally tepid receptions. Still, Schumann was not deterred and expressed his confidence to a colleague that "sooner or later [both pieces] will assert themselves in their own way," just as the First Symphony had. One year later, Schumann submitted his* ***Overture, Scherzo, and Finale*** *to his publisher as his Second Symphony, but was refused publication. He eventually revised the whole piece (practically rewriting the last movement) and premiered the new version in 1845.*

Throughout the three movements, Schumann's efforts to market both the first movement as a stand-alone concert overture and the whole work as a "symphonette" are easily perceived. A piece unto itself, the Overture in all but harmonic practice resembles more the Italianate Rossini-style opera overture than it does the development-heavy German style that one might have expected from Schumann. It begins with a slow introduction in the minor mode that shares motivic material with the lighthearted Allegro *to follow. Schumann then ties the Scherzo to the Overture by lifting the melody from the end of the first movement exactly to form the jaunty main theme of the scherzo in triple time. Cast in C-sharp minor and originally titled* ***Intermezzo****, the Scherzo follows the normal form, with repeated trio section. By contrast, Schumann crafts a significantly more complex last movement, as if to convince the listener of the whole piece's symphonic nature. The lively, fugal Finale is imitative and vivacious, rich in intricate development, and culminates with a majestic chorale near the end.*

Divertimento . . . . . *Béla Bartók*

Béla Bartók always knew exactly what he intended to write before he put pen to paper. It is no wonder, then, that he composed his ***Divertimento*** *in hardly more than two weeks after he accepted the commission from Paul Sacher (1906-1999), champion of twentieth-century music and founder-director of the Basel Chamber Orchestra. The work, written in 1939, was the last of Bartók's compositions to be introduced in Europe before his reluctant move to America in 1940. After* ***Divertimento*** *and the last of his six string quartets, he composed nothing more until 1943, when he began his* ***Concerto for Orchestra****.*

As its name suggests, ***Divertimento*** *is in essence more lighthearted and playful than many other of Bartók's earlier, generally intense pieces. In the commission, Sacher had indeed requested something less demanding than what had come out of his 1936 commission –* ***Music for Strings, Percussion,***

and Celesta *– and something more in the spirit of the eighteenth century. It is also likely that in concocting a piece so felicitous, Bartók may also have been searching for some relief and higher spirits during the summer of 1939, with the German invasion of Poland to come just two weeks after he completed the score. In any case, Sacher generously ensured that the composer was as comfortable as possible by housing him in Saanen, a peaceful Swiss town more cut off from the tension brewing elsewhere in Europe. Once the score was finished, Bartók wrote to his elder son, "The newspapers are full of military articles, they have taken defense measures on the more important passes… I am also worried about whether I shall be able to get home from here if this or that happens. Fortunately I can put this worry out of my mind if I have to… while I am at work it does not disturb me."*

The first movement of ***Divertimento*** *audibly reflects the rural setting in which it was conceived, and highlights more than ever Bartók's longstanding fascination with folk music: boisterous country-like dance tunes appear throughout, creating an atmosphere of rustic celebration. Later, various groupings of soloists emerge from the texture and alternate with the full ensemble in a style reminiscent of the Baroque* concerto grosso. *The excitment builds to a climax before winding down to a more peaceful ending. The second movement is more ruminative than the first, and is an example, albeit more tame than others, of Bartók's "night music," which is characterized by eerie chord clusters and instrumental replications of nocturnal animal calls and other sounds of nature. This particular example is especially animated despite its slow tempo, full of alternating jabs from various groups of instruments, ultimately peaking, then ending gently. The final movement returns once again to the first movement's joyous spirit. It is full of surprises – a fugue becomes a cadenza for solo violin, then just at the movement's climax the dynamic drops to nothing, and an almost mischievous pizzicato passage catapults the piece to its conclusion.*

– Notes by Amalia Bandy

BIOGRAPHY

Romanian violinist, composer, and conductor CRISTIAN MĂCELARU started studying music at the age of six in his native country. After winning top prizes in the National Music Olympiad of Romania (1994, 1996, 1997), Mr. Măcelaru attended the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, where he furthered his studies in both violin and conducting. Upon his graduation, he moved to Miami, where he received a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Miami. While in Miami, Mr. Măcelaru was assistant conductor of the University of Miami Symphony Orchestra, associate conductor of the Florida Youth Orchestra, conductor and founder of the Clarke Chamber Players, and concertmaster of the Miami Symphony Orchestra. He has performed recitals throughout the United States, Europe, and China, as well as with orchestras such as the Houston Symphony Orchestra, the Miami Symphony Orchestra, the Naples Philharmonic, and the Banatul Philharmonic. Mr. Măcelaru recently received the Master of Music degree in violin performance from The Shepherd School of Music under the guidance of Sergiu Luca and completed a Master of Music degree in conducting with Larry Rachleff. He is currently Staff Conductor at the Shepherd School, a conductor with the Houston Youth Symphony, and the founder and artistic director of the Crisalis Music Project. Visit www.CrisalisMusicProject.org.

RICE